FOCUS ON WESTERN ISLAMISM

REVEALED: Iranian Regime Involvement with Texas Student Anti-Israel Protests

A photo of a pro-Hamas demonstrator in Washington D.C. holding a mock severed head of President Joe Biden, at a protest promoted and attended by Al-Awda, a radical group that works with Iranian regime proxies in America and openly supports Iranian-backed terrorist organizations in the Middle East. (Photo provided by Ryan Mauro of Capital Research Center).

By Sam Westrop

August 1, 2024

Leading Iranian regime operatives played a key role organizing student anti-Israel protests, an investigation by FWI reveals.

In early July, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence alleged that "Iranian government actor have sought to opportunistically take advantage of ongoing protests regarding the war in Gaza … We have observed actors tied to Iran's government posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests, and even providing financial support to protesters."

The statement yielded considerable coverage in international media, although no explicit examples of such Iranian involvement were identified.

FWI has since found evidence of Iranian regime involvement with anti-Israel and pro-Hamas protests and encampments.

Rise Against Oppression, a Houston-based "collective of Muslim grassroots activists," participated in the University of Houston anti-Israel encampment, backing the creation of student movement's "Popular University" and working with Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), the chief organization behind the campus protest movement this year.

JUNE 22
4-7PM
IMAM
KHOMEINI CONFERENCE
15500 VOSS RD#200, SUGARLAND, TX 77498
RISE
AGAINST OPPRESSION
SPEAKER
SPEAKER
SPEAKER
SH. FAHEEM ABDUL GHANI
IMAM KHOMEINI & THE PALESTINIAN STRUGLLE
SH. USAMA ABDUL GHANI
IMAM KHOMEINI: THE MANIFESTATION OF GHADIR
MOL. MUZZAMIL ZAIDI
IMAM KHOMEINI: A ROLE MODEL FOR THE WESTERN YOUTH
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Imam Khomeini Conference:
RISE is Commemorating the 35th Anniversary of #imamkhomeini 's demise. The purpose of this conference is to honor the memory of Imam Khomeini and to draw inspiration from his teachings for the progress of our community. We aim to learn from the Imam's speeches and writings, and to benefit from the various aspects of his exceptional personality, each of which offers valuable lessons.
At this conference, our esteemed scholars will cover three key topics from the teachings of Imam Khomeini:
1. Sheikh Usama Abdul Ghani: Imam Khomeini: The Manifestation of Ghadir.
2. Sheikh Faheem Abdul Ghani: Imam
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A Iranian regime conference organized by a Texas organization behind the student protests

Rise Against Oppression may describe itself merely as a "collective," but it is an unabashed representative of the regime in Tehran. In June, the group organized an "Imam Khomeini Conference" in Houston, where topics included "Imam Khomeini & the Palestinian Struggle" as well as "Imam Khomeini: A Role Model for the Western Youth."

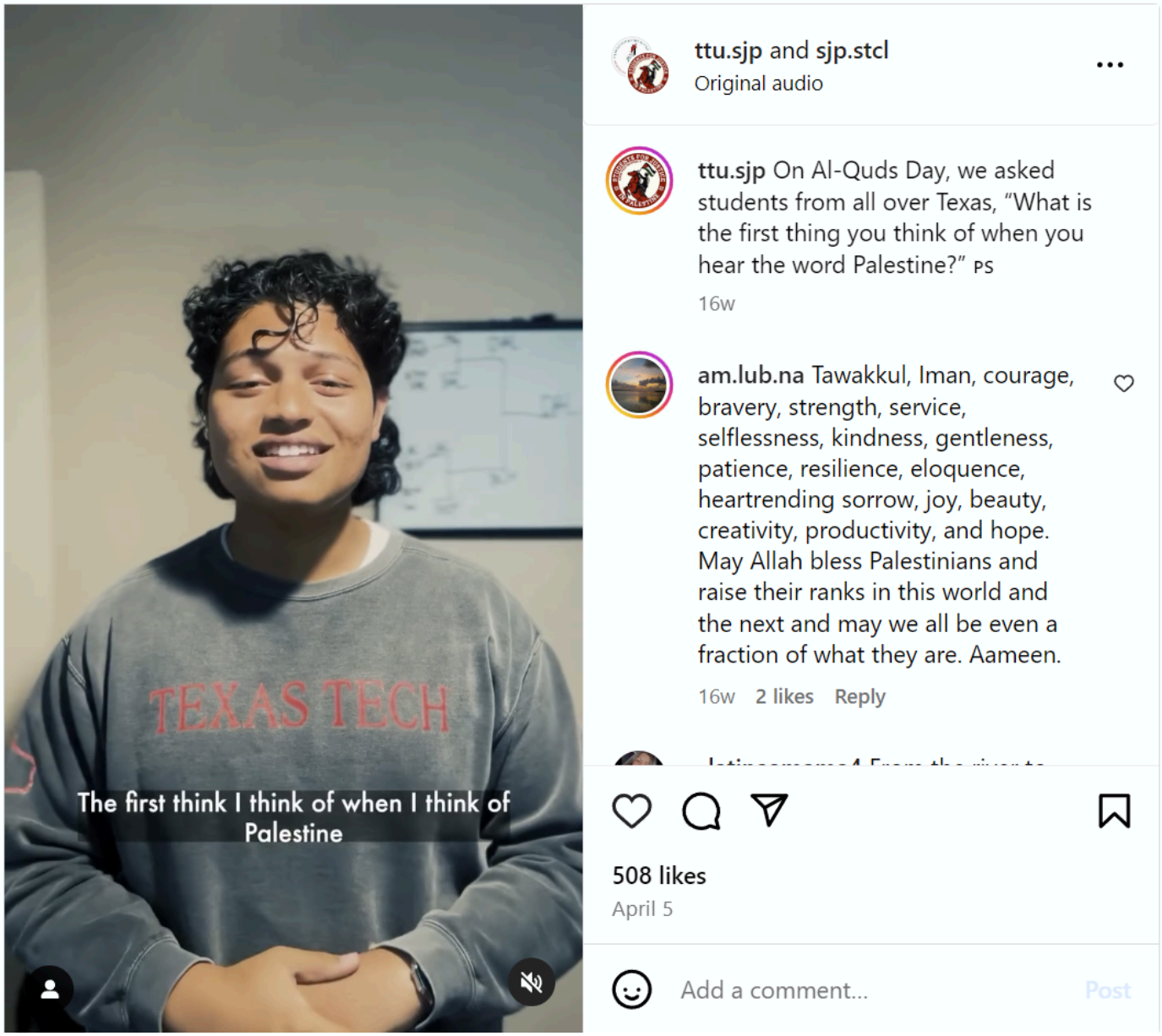
Other Rise events have included former SJP leaders such as Mohammad Nabulsi; Yemeni activists such as Yousef Mawry, who is aligned with the Houthi terrorist movement; and Muzzamil Zaidi, a Houston Islamist currently resident in the Iranian city of Qoms.

On May 1, just months after the Rise event, Zaidi pleaded guilty to transferring tens of thousands of dollars to Ayatollah Khamenei. According to the Department of Justice, Zaidi and his accomplice "collected payments" of khums, a religious tax, "as well as donations purportedly to help victims of the ongoing civil war in Yemen, from individuals in the United States," before enlisting "friends, family members, and other associates to carry the cash out of the United States."

Student protests in Texas and elsewhere have also enjoyed support from the Muslim Congress, a Texas Shia Islamist organization and another key Iranian regime voice in the United States. The Muslim Congress openly promotes the writings and ideas of Ayatollah Khamenei and other senior regime clerics. Its events in the United States are frequently covered in Iranian regime media,

Across America, the Houston-headquartered Muslim Congress organizes the U.S. rallies for the regime's annual "Al-Quds Day," an infamous annual global event, coordinated from Tehran, designed to celebrate the designated terrorist organization Hezbollah and plan the eradication of Israel.

The Al-Quds Day protests in Texas this year enjoyed the support of multiple radical student organizations behind the encampments, including SJP, whose leaders appeared to be directly involved in promoting and organizing the Iranian regime event across the state.


TEXAS TECH
The first think I think of when I think of Palestine
ttu.sjp and sjp.stcl
Original audio
ttu.sjp On Al-Quds Day, we asked students from all over Texas, "What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word Palestine?" PS
16w
am.lub.na Tawakkul, Iman, courage, bravery, strength, service, selflessness, kindness, gentleness, patience, resilience, eloquence, heartrending sorrow, joy, beauty, creativity, productivity, and hope. May Allah bless Palestinians and raise their ranks in this world and the next and may we all be even a fraction of what they are. Aameen.
16w 2 likes Reply
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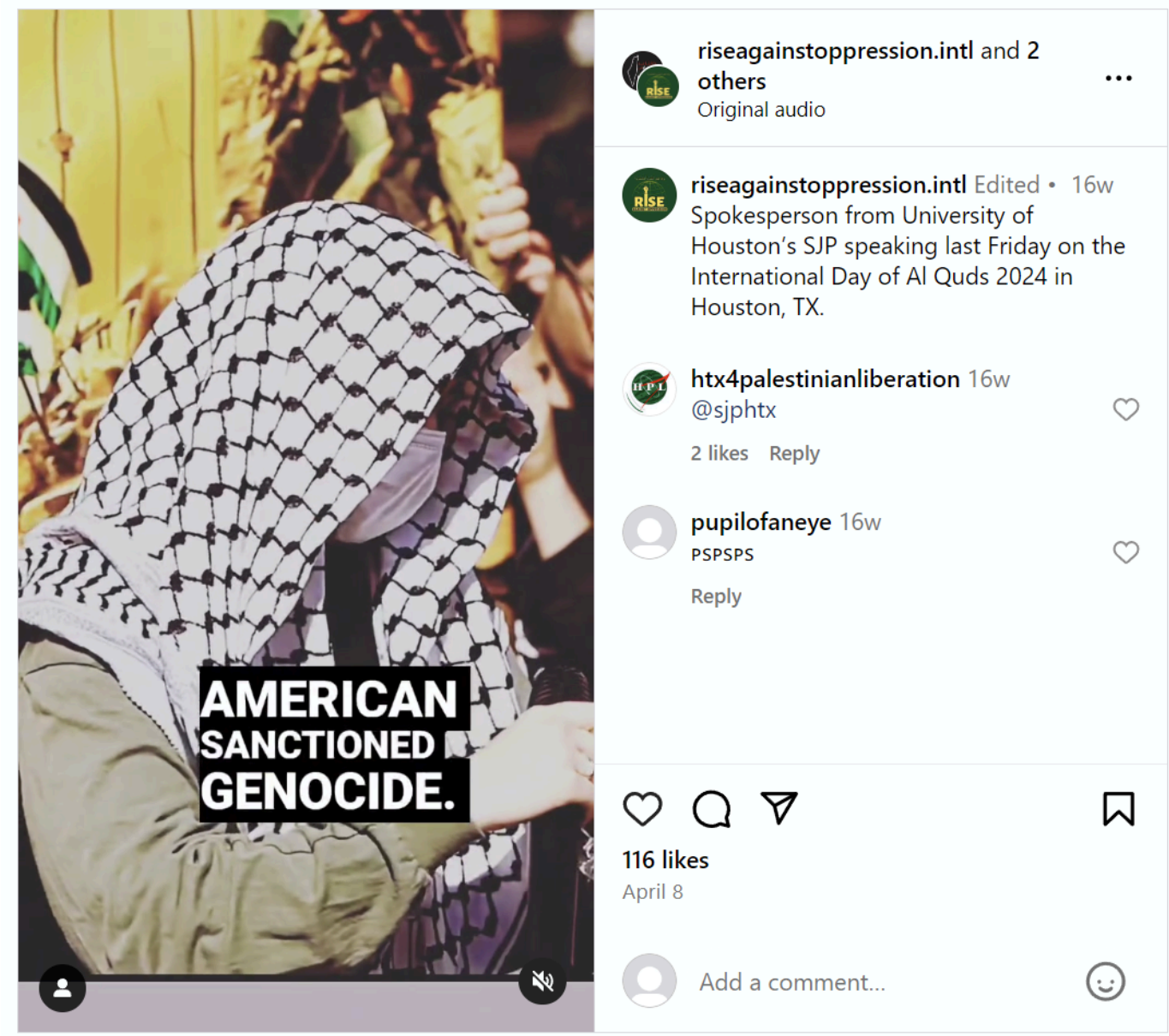
Post

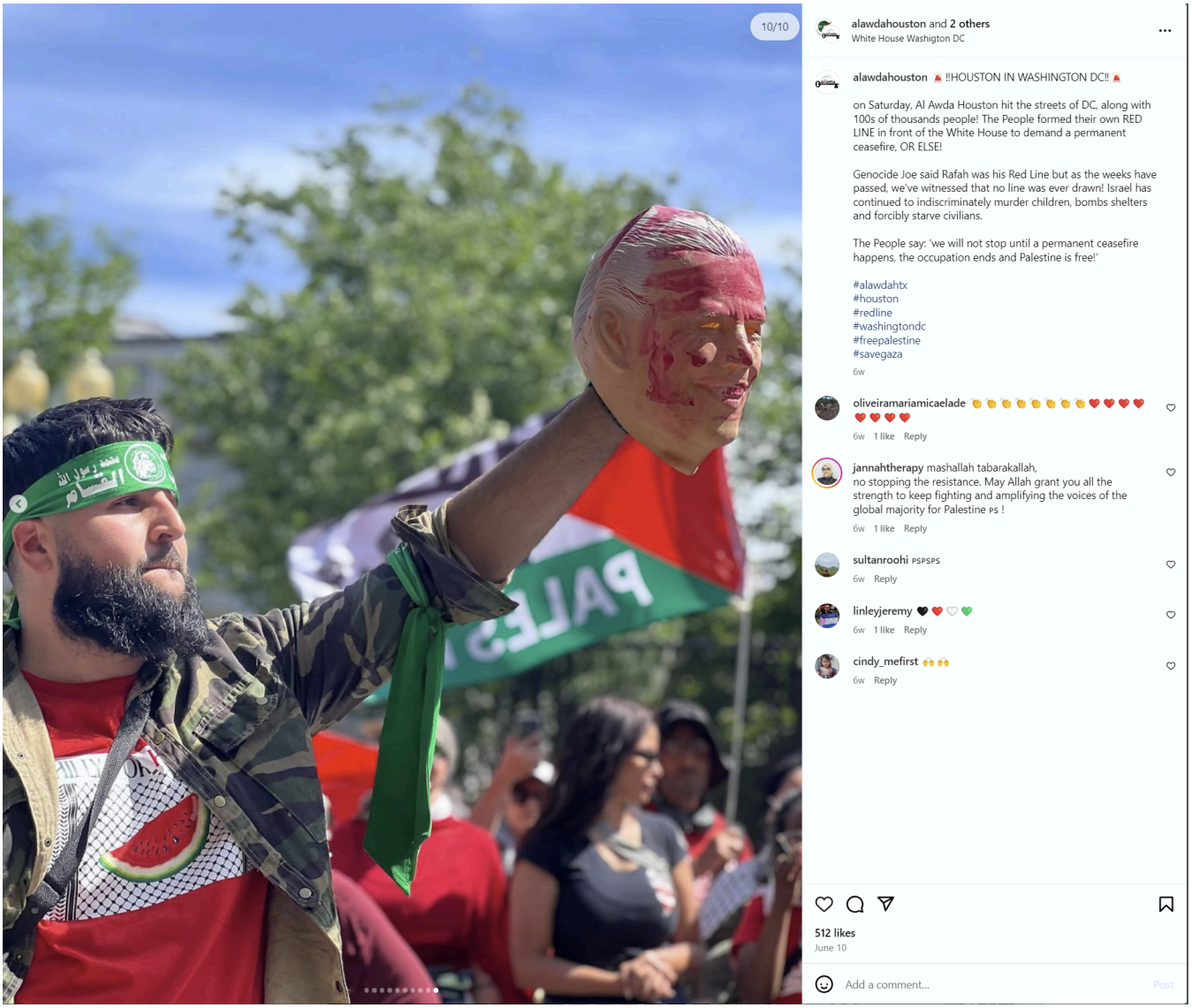
Students from the University of Houston's SJP branch, alongside activists from the Palestinian Youth Movement, Rise Against Oppression and other organizations, all spoke at the Tehran's Al-Quds Day event in Houston.



The rally, organized jointly by Muslim Congress and Rise Against Oppression, featured open support for the October 7th attacks and Hamas's "martyrs."

In Texas especially, there is consistent overlap between Iranian, far-Left and radical Arabist networks. For instance, the Palestinian Youth Movement, along with another extremist organization named Al-Awda, were both key drivers behind the student anti-Israel and pro-Hamas "encampments" across the country over the past few months. Both collaborate closely with the Iranian-tied Muslim Congress and Rise Against Oppression.

Al-Awda officials have openly embraced convicted Iranian-backed terrorists. Al-Awda's founder, Abbas Hamideh, is openly anti-Jewish and supports terror attacks against Israelis. He is a prominent public cheerleader for the designated terrorist organization Hezbollah.


10/10
alawdahouston and 2 others
White House Washigton DC
alawdahouston 🚨 !!HOUSTON IN WASHINGTON DC!! 🚨
on Saturday, Al Awda Houston hit the streets of DC, along with 100s of thousands people! The People formed their own RED LINE in front of the White House to demand a permanent ceasefire, OR ELSE!
Genocide Joe said Rafah was his Red Line but as the weeks have passed, we've witnessed that no line was ever drawn! Israel has continued to indiscriminately murder children, bombs shelters and forcibly starve civilians.
The People say: 'we will not stop until a permanent ceasefire happens, the occupation ends and Palestine is free!'
#alawdahtx
#houston
#redline
#washingtondc
#freepalestine
#savegaza
6w
oliveiramariamicaelade
6w 1 like Reply
jannahtherapy mashallah tabarakallah, no stopping the resistance. May Allah grant you all the strength to keep fighting and amplifying the voices of the global majority for Palestine PS !
6w 1 like Reply
sultanroohi PSPSPS
6w Reply
linleyjeremy
6w 1 like Reply
cindy_mefirst
6w Reply
512 likes
June 10
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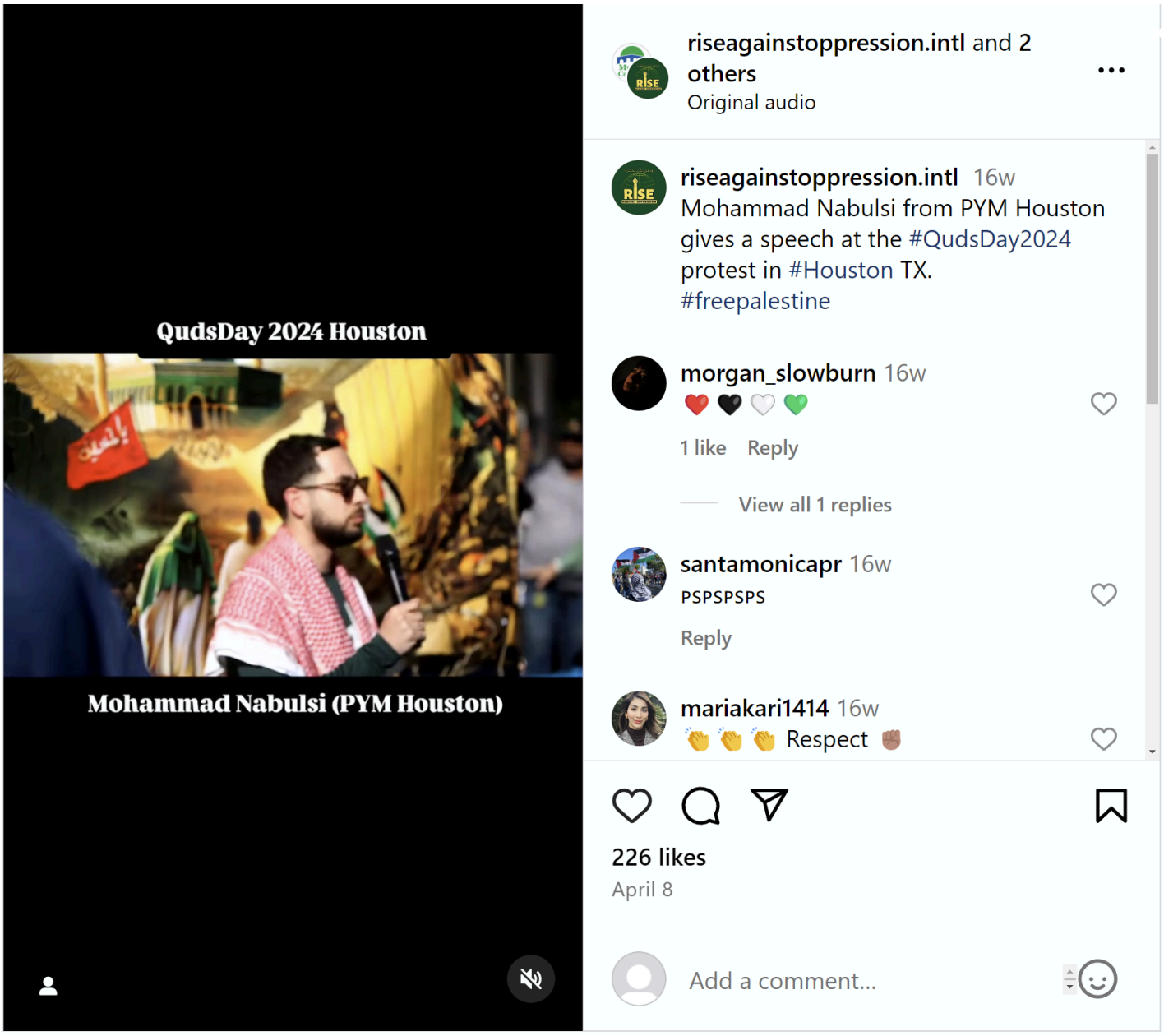
Post

A photo of a pro-Hamas demonstrator holding a mock severed head of President Joe Biden, at a protest promoted by Al-Awda's Houston branch

The Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) and its officials, meanwhile, appear supportive of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a designated terrorist organization also backed by Iran. One of its leading officials, Mohammed Nabulsi (who spoke at the Houston Al-Quds Day) openly supports Iran-backed Hezbollah, and is quoted in Hezbollah media.



PYM Leader (and former SJP official) Mohammed Nabulsi, addresses the Iranian regime-organized Al-Quds Day event in Houston, Texas.

Muslim Congress and Rise Against Oppression have also collaborated closely with organizations from a Beijing-backed collection of groups labelled in a recent report by the Network Contagion Research Institute as the "Singham network." In May 2024, PYM, Al-Awda, SJP, and Singham network groups organized the People's Conference on Palestine, at which terrorists from the PFLP and Palestinian Islamic Jihad – both Iranian-backed were openly lionized.

Such was the importance of the conference, boasted Singham network media outlet, the *People's Dispatch*, just a few days later "the leader of Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei wrote an open letter" in praise of "the student movement in the United States."

Rise Against Oppression is also involved with radical activist efforts such as Shut it Down for Palestine, a national civil disruption effort by the Singham network, Al-Awda, along with the Democratic Socialists of America, and others.

At universities across the country, Tehran-aligned Shia Islamist student groups such as Ahlul Bayt Student associations have also taken part in the encampments. At the University of Houston, the Ahlul Bayt Student Organization (ABSO) played a particularly leading role in the protests.

ABSO operates out of the Islamic Education Center of Houston, a key Iranian regime mosque in the United States, at which regime propaganda songs are performed; and from which, the analyst Jason Brodsky notes, the Muslim Congress was established. Branches of the Ahlul Bayt Student movement at University of Texas's Dallas and Austin campuses have also partnered with SJP.

When, a year from now, nonprofit organizations file their tax returns for 2024, additional pro-Tehran funding for protests through the 501(c) system may be apparent. Certainly, in previous years, grant-making foundations such as the Maximum Difference Foundation, for example, have given tens of thousands of dollars to groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace, the Tides Center, and WESPAC, all of which are close partners and supporters of SJP. The Maximum Difference Foundation is the grant-making arm of a wealthy Iranian-American family believed to be closely connected to the regime and its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Many of the organizations identified in Texas by FWI appear to be working openly for the interests of foreign hostile states and violent extremists while engaging in patent political activities. None, however, is registered as a foreign agent under FARA laws.

That the Department of Justice has not enforced the rules appears to be a political decision. Perhaps, with some pressure from Congress, and this recent statement from the Director of National Intelligence, the federal government might rethink its approach.

Sam Westrop is director of Islamist Watch, a project of the Middle East Forum.